

Louis Lenoix House
514-16-18 Toulouse Street
New Orleans
Orleans Parish
Louisiana

HABS No. LA-1115

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PHOTOGRAPH
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

LOUIS LANOIX HOUSE

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The Lanoix House is located in Square 27, Lot 17 of the Vieux Carré in the city of New Orleans, Orleans Parish, Louisiana. The street address is 514-16-18 Toulouse Street.

The house is presently owned by the Jackson Brewing Company of New Orleans and is contiguous to other properties on Toulouse Street which are owned by the Brewery. It is empty and unused. There is a photograph in the files of the Vieux Carré Commission by Walter C. Keenan, dated July 7, 1949, which shows potted plants on the balcony, indicating probable residential occupancy of the upper floor at that date.

The significance of this residential structure lies not only in the fact that it is one of the older houses in the Vieux Carré, but also in the existence of a distinctive entresol floor. The entresol is an intermediate floor which is lighted at floor level by the fan lights of the arched openings of the ground floor below. This feature, in addition to the spacious ground floor which is divided transversely by two arched brick openings, clearly defines the commercial character of the lower floors.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Since no contract drawings or documents have been discovered, it is not possible to ascertain the exact date of construction; however, through the Notarial Acts of sale, it is possible to deduce a reasonable approximate date. On January 6, 1818, "a lot of ground on Toulouse Street measuring 80' front by about 84' with all buildings and improvements thereon" was purchased by Silvain Peyroux from the succession of Mrs. Mary Wheaton Marré for \$22,000 (Notarial Act, Carlile Pollack, NP, January 6, 1818 - Notarial Archives, City of New Orleans). On March 6, 1824, before the Notary Marc Lafitte (Notarial Archives, City of New Orleans), M. Peyroux transferred the title to M. Louis Lanoix, declaring that in reality the lot was purchased by him for M. Louis Lanoix in 1818 and that subsequently he had caused the erection of the two-story brick house on a portion of this property. Also, the Louisiana Courier on May 10, 1820, announced that "Dutillet and Sagory will move their auction store to Madam Vienne's, lately occupied by Mr. Louis Lanoix" This would indicate that M. Lanoix had, therefore, moved to his own recently completed house next door.

The Notarial Archives, City of New Orleans (Loyola Street, New Orleans), furnishes the following transfers of this property prior to the purchase by M. Peyroux (for M. Lanoix): Mrs. Mary Wheaton Marré acquired the property with all buildings thereon from

Alexander Milne by retrocession (July 3, 1813, Narcisse Broutin, NP); Alexander Milne had previously acquired it from Mrs. Mary Wheaton Marré (February 12, 1811, Narcisse Broutin, NP); Guillermo Marré, husband of Mary Wheaton, acquired it from Sebastian Estevan with the buildings "erected at the expense of Mr. Estevan" (March 3, 1803, Pierre Pedesclaux, NP); Sebastian Estevan acquired it from Joseph Xavier de Pontalba, Lt. Col. and Commandant of Royal Militia (May 24, 1796, Pedro Pedesclaux, NP). This last notarial act states that a wall 10 feet high, 1 foot thick, and 40 feet long was constructed at the expense of the "present vendor" after purchase of the land in April 1796 at a public sale ordered by Indendent and before the Notary Don Carlos Ximenes.

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In the files of the Vieux Carré Commission, New Orleans, Louisiana, there is an undated statement by Mr. Henry J. Rousset which relates that the family (Rousset) records "go back to the fire which occurred in 1796 which destroyed all records." (This date does not coincide with the great fire of December 8, 1798, which destroyed 212 buildings). The statement continues further that 514 Toulouse Street before 1796 was owned by Captain Joseph Genois who had inherited it from his family.

From the above documents, it appears that there were buildings on the property prior to the building erected for M. Lanoix. However, there is no evidence where anything, other than materials possibly, was incorporated in the present building.

Subsequent to the transfer of title to M. Lanoix in 1824, the following transfers are recorded in the Notarial Archives, City of New Orleans: M. Louis Lanoix represented by Francois Sel sold to Giraud Marin Plique the lot with two brick houses, one of which has two stories, and all other buildings thereon (November 6, 1826, H. Lavergne, NP); Giraud M. Plique (presently of Paris) retroceded to M. Louis Lanoix (act of Pierre Charles Froger Deschesner, Jr., NP of Paris, France, January 22, 1829, annexed to act of W. Christy, NP, April 25, 1829). This act describes the property as:

1. One house elevated above the ground with an entresol and a first story
2. Another house raised above the ground with an attic above for use as a store house
3. A courtyard serving both houses
4. A third house separated from the two preceding houses by the courtyard is raised above the ground, having an entresol serving as a store or warehouse and a first story serving as rooms for the domestics.

The undated plans for this property which show the above-described structures are located in Plan Book 44-A, folio 78 (Notarial Archives,

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City of New Orleans). Further transfers are as follows: Louis Lanoix, represented by Francois Sel sells to Achille Rivarde, Marie Jean Sylvain Peyroux and Louis R. Arcueil (April 25, 1829, William Christy, NP); Achille Rivarde sells 1/3 interest by act of dissolution to Marie Jean Gabriel Sylvain Peyroux and Louis Bernard Rossignol Arcueil (July 8, 1835, L. T. Caire, NP); Marie Jean G. Sylvain Peyroux and Louis Bernard Rossignol Arcueil sells to Olivier Blineau (February 29, 1836, Louis T. Caire, NP); Olivier Blineau sells undivided 1/2 interest in lot and two brick houses to Antoine Carriere (January 4, 1837, L. T. Caire, NP); Olivier Blineau and Antoine Carriere sell to Isaac Osgood and George W. Johnson (April 2, 1850, H. B. Cenas, NP); Isaac Osgood sells undivided 1/2 interest to George Washington Johnson (March 8, 1855, Theodore Guyol, NP); Bradish Johnson declared ownership of undivided 1/2 interest by succession of George Washington Johnson (Olographic Testament, July 7, 1856). By auction sale (by order of the Second Judicial District Court of Plaquemine, Louisiana, December 19, 1856) Philippe Avegno, Jr., acquired the property from the estate of George Washington Johnson and Bradish Johnson (February 3, 1857, Philip Lacoste, NP). This act describes a two-story brick building having a storeroom with six rooms and a cistern, hydrant, and bricked yard. The property was transferred by succession of Philippe Avegno, Jr., to Frank Avegno, et al., by the Civil District Court (April 17, 1893, No. 38,199); by Frank Avegno, et al., to Cecile Avegno, wife of August Rousset (March 30, 1904, C. T. Soniat, NP); by succession of Mrs. Cecile Avegno, widow of August Rousset, Sr., to Joseph A. Rousset, Henry A. Rousset, and Philip A. Rousset, et al. (September 21, 1943, Civil District Court No. 251-844); by Act of Partition (Civil District Court No. 251-763, dated August 19, 1943) by Joseph A. Rousset, et al., to James Harold Rousset, et al. (September 29, 1943, Felix J. Dreyfous, NP). The property was acquired by Louis J. Healy from James Harold Rousset, et al. (June 8, 1954, Alwyn J. Justrabo, NP). Louia J. Healy sold it to Jackson Brewing Company (October 12, 1954, B. Burk, NP).

Regarding the transfers mentioned above, one fact should be noted. In the sale by Pontalba to Estevan (May 24, 1796) the property is described as a "40 ft. front" on Toulouse Street. When Estevan sold to Marré (March 3, 1803) it is described as "situated on Toulouse Street measuring 80 ft. front." This is interpreted to mean that Estevan had already owned the adjoining property. This 80-foot front dimension continues through the sale by Isaac Osgood to George Washington Johnson (March 8, 1855). Bradish Johnson then declared ownership of undivided 1/2 interest (July 7, 1856) and when the next transfer was made by auction sale to Philippe Avegno, Jr., the Act states "measuring about 43'8" front on Toulouse Street----" It appears, therefore, that the subject property began as a single lot of ground, then passed successively as part of a larger parcel, until it was sold again as a single lot in 1857. Also to be noted is the number of partnerships which owned the property and operated it undoubtedly as a business partnership between April 1829 and March 1855. Search was not conducted in the City Directories located in the Louisiana State

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Library at Chartres and St. Ann Street, New Orleans, but they might possibly throw some light on the business operations of these various partners.

Other than the unpublished original Notarial Acts (Notarial Archives, City of New Orleans), the original map of New Orleans by Pilie, dated 18 August 1808, was consulted and verifies the location of the Marré property on that date (Map Room, Howard-Tilton Library, Tulane University). Translations from the original French or Spanish documents were furnished by the Vieux Carré Survey Board, which is currently being sponsored by the Edward G. Schlieder Educational Foundation, New Orleans.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The Lanoix House is typical of a plan type which combines commercial facilities on the lower floors with residential spaces on the third floor, a porte-cochere, or carriageway on one side, and a courtyard with family stairway and slave quarter. It is situated on a narrow city lot and is separated by party walls from adjoining structures. Notable for this type of structure is the entresol, which provided a storage space immediately above the store on the ground floor. Goods were hauled up to this level through an open hatch in the floor located directly over the middle arched opening in the front. In addition, there is also a trace of a stairway in the far right rear of the lower floor. This was probably a service stair to the entresol.

The fabric of the building has been preserved with only the minimum of maintenance required for structural stability. The interior floors have been shored up by a combination of concrete piers, steel pipe columns, and steel beams. The front and rear walls have also been reinforced by the use of circular steel plates on the exterior tied by steel rods to the original wood floor joists on the interior. In many places the soft red bricks have eroded and cracks have developed in the walls.

During the progress of this report, work had begun on replastering the exterior walls.

The floor boards of the entresol are relatively sound; however, those on the third floor are, for the most part, rotted and unsound. The roof sheathing, the composition roofing shingles, and the front balcony decking are recent and sound.

The main building, excluding the stairway at the rear, is a rectangle with over-all dimensions of 43'-9" x 54'-7". The over-all dimensions of the stairway enclosure are 12'-7" x 16'-5 1/2"; it is at the right rear of the main block.

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It was not possible to ascertain any information regarding the foundations.

The bearing walls on the exterior, as well as the transverse brick piers and arches on the interior, are of soft red brick that is typical of the period. They are plastered on both sides except for the now-exposed party wall.

Although there are four fireplaces on the third floor, the chimneys have been removed above the existing modern roof.

The 1-1/2" x 10" cypress plank floor boards are supported by 4" x 12" beams, 16" on center. The beams are exposed and span a maximum of 25'-5" between the front wall and the intermediate transverse brick wall. The span from this wall to the rear wall is also 25'-5". The direction of the span of the beams is the same on all floors, except over the carriage-way, where they span in an opposite direction between the brick walls enclosing this area.

At the third floor there is a wrought-iron balcony on the front. It is supported by 3" x 5/8" x 4" iron bars cantilevered from the wall and spaced approximately 3'-0" on center. There is a modern pine board deck and a decorative wrought-iron railing which is 3'-0" high.

On the front there are three simple arched openings at the sidewalk level with the one on the left, which frames the carriage-way, being 10" wider than the other two. It is presently closed by a slat gate. The other two openings which lead to the main downstairs room are closed with double-paneled doors and glazed side lights. The upper panel of the doors is also glazed. All the glazed panels in doors and side lights are protected on the exterior by iron gratings. The fan lights above these openings, which light the entresol, are also closed with iron grating, behind which are modern plywood panels. On the first floor, at the rear in the courtyard, is an open archway to the carriage-way and a single arched opening leading to the main room. This latter opening is presently closed with make-shift plywood and doors. The iron grating in the fan light in the entresol still remains. There is also a wooden shuttered window in the entresol above the carriage-way.

At the third-floor level on the front there are five symmetrically placed doorways leading to the balcony from the living rooms. These doorways are framed by a flat, unadorned, stuccoed surround, in each case. These openings are closed by full-length wooden shutters on the exterior and glazed and paneled doors on the interior. In the rear at the third-floor level there are three doorways between the former balcony and the living rooms. They are closed by modern plywood panels on the exterior and glazed and paneled doors on the interior.

On the wall of the stair enclosure, which is perpendicular to the rear wall of the main structure, there is a large arched opening on the ground level and a small boarded-up window at each of the two landings. 36-NEW 63-

The gable roof of the main house has a pitch of 6 3/4" in 12". It is supported by a wooden truss. On the front there are two symmetrically placed pedimented wooden dormers with wooden shingle sides and circular-headed double-hung windows (six-over-six lights). Although there is no documentary evidence, the present roof and dormars are obviously later additions, since in the attic there is definite evidence of a former roof in the masonry wall of the gable end. Over the stair enclosure there is a lean-to roof, which is also typical.

On the interior, the first floor and the entresol each consist of what is essentially one large space divided only by the transverse brick bearing wall at the middle. On the first floor this wall is pierced by two large arched openings, with a span of approximately 12'-0". In the entresol there are three symmetrically placed openings in this wall. These openings are rectangular and framed at the head with a wood lintel beam to support the brick wall above. This beam is continuous for the entire length of the wall. On the third floor, the interior is divided by a central hallway, extending from front to rear, with two large rooms on each side. The rooms on the rear are further partitioned off to form two smaller rooms. These partitions, as well as those in the hallway, are of wooden studs plastered on both sides. All masonry bearing walls on this floor are also plastered. Although the ceiling beams are presently exposed, there are traces of a former lath-and-plaster ceiling. There is a fragment of a plaster ceiling cornice existing in the stairwell at this level. All floors are wooden except the first, which is modern cement.

The wooden stairway is enclosed in a brick structure outside of the main building, with access to these stairs being directly from the courtyard on the ground level. At the other levels, the stair has direct access to the rooms. There are only four sets of interior double doors remaining. They are three paneled. In one of them the upper panels are glazed. There is no decorative trim on the first two floors. On the third floor, wooden trim with moldings are found at the doorways and a chair-rail molding surrounds the rooms. The four fireplaces on the upper floor are bare, having been stripped of the mantalpieces and trim.

In addition to several iron strap hinges and scroll hinges on some of the doors and shutters, there are iron pintles embedded in several of the jambs. There is also a heavy iron pulley attached to the entresol ceiling directly above the hatchway in the floor.

At the present time there is a bare electric bulb hanging in the ground floor. The upper floors have similar bare hanging cords and a conduit, which is disconnected.

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There is no heating in the building except for the four original fireplaces on the third floor, and these were closed off when the new roof was installed.

The building is situated between a similar later building on the Decatur Street side and by an empty parking lot on the Chartres Street side. The neighborhood has deteriorated, and is used mainly for commercial and manufacturing operations.

The rear courtyard is enclosed on all three sides by a modern stuccoed masonry wall. The greatest part of this area is paved with modern concrete. No outbuilding exists at the present time, although there are traces of what was the slave quarter across the rear property line.

Prepared by Woodrow W. Wilkins
Architect
National Park Service
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